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On Book Sprints

v1.1

INTRODUCTION

In this book, we reflect on the process of the Book Sprint as a form of collaborative engagement and knowledge production. Simply put, it is a group of people and a facilitator coming together to write a book in three to five days. However, sprinting contains a number of important and unique potentials for the creation of new knowledges, new ideas, new concepts and, most importantly, new books to emerge as a collective project. In delivering these outcomes, Book Sprints can be taken as a set of 'patterns' or know-how that enables the rapid development and writing of a short-form to medium-length text as a generative practice.

When speaking about collaborative writing approaches such as Book Sprints, writers regularly express dismay. Indeed, writers often immediately reject collaborative writing, preferring a single-authored mode, preferably a "slow" writing style. However, it is important to point out that writing has always involved collective work, with copy-editors, proofers, editors, colleagues, partners and mentors. Indeed, writing has never solely been in a single key, with the reality being a wide spectrum of writing styles moving between fast, often journalistic and impressionistic writing styles, to the slower pace of learned books and journals. Book Sprints seem to occupy a middle ground between these, deploying a writing process which is materialized in software, organized by a set of practices (patterns) and supported by a writing facilitator.

The book sprinting process makes use of a number of what we call "patterns" in the development of a collaborative writing event. These can be deployed in phases, each of which will be discussed in detail later in this book, for example conceiving, structuring, writing, revising, and publishing. The patterns provide the context and the norms that surround a particular moment in the Book Sprint process and the idea is that these patterns provide broad contours of sprinting activity rather than an overly prescriptive set of rules. These patterns are heuristics to help participants understand when certain moments in a Book Sprint are begun and finished, although, of course, there is the possibility of revisiting earlier patterns if necessary.

We use the term pattern deliberately here, alluding to Christopher Alexander's notion of architectural ordering (see Alexander 1979), which has been taken up in software development through the creation of common libraries of software functions. The patterns that we outline in this book are, however, intended to be open rather than closed in their instantiation. Similar to Alexander's concern with architected space and the people that will one day inhabit it, the book sprinting process we detail here is under-determined and ideally creates spaces for people to interact, converse, contest, and crucially write within. Of course, a Book Sprint is only a sprint in a figurative sense, but could be more literally considered an enabling environment that creates the conditions of possibility for contributors to express themselves through concept-creation, structuring, writing and illustrating.

It is important to note that the form of writing that emerges from Book Sprints is mediated through a set of software tools, and uses what we might call a pattern-set, which is provided as affordances of norms and values for a group of nascent writers. That is, the Book Sprint has both a technical and a social dimension which together enable the book to be written, but most importantly for the space of collaboration to be opened.

This approach which highlights the contingent and creative aspects of the collaborative process can be challenging for contributors (and sometimes the facilitator) and it is common for the contributors to move between lows and highs at various points through the process. Due to the compressed nature of the time available for writing, which may be as little as three and as many as five days, the book sprinting process is able to work successfully because it places the construction site of the book central to the collective and individual focus of activity. That is, the co-written text is the mediating object that is shared by the participants. Whilst digressions, discussions, and speculative thought are encouraged, ultimately the book topic, question or structure creates the space for these thoughts and ideas to become material for the book, or not, as the case may be. Additionally, the book sprinting process, by stressing the collaborative aspects, materializes the being-together, working-in-tandem, sharing and intersubjective exchange of ideas, but also written text, submerging authorship into a collective form of writing which is extremely powerful.

So what does a Book Sprint do well? Here, we point to what we think are useful ways of thinking about the two modes of knowledge production within which the Book

Sprint operates. The first, the extractive Book Sprint, is generally mobilized to document and describe known objects, processes or work practices. In this mode, technical manuals represent an exemplar for the kinds of descriptive process that takes place. The second is the generative Book Sprint which is mobilized to create new concepts, enable critical reflection on practice, produce new ideas, practices and meanings. In reality both of these modes may be woven together as they operate on a continuum, but it is generally useful to have in mind the kind of activity that a particular Book Sprint will be geared towards. Some of the things Book Sprints do well include:

- Opening a space for critical reflection on practice.
- Eliciting knowledge from subject-matter experts, e.g., legacy or new technologies, NGO reports, etc.
- Creating responses to fast-changing social and political controversies.
- Facilitating new networks and vocabularies between individuals and organizations.

We also anticipate multiple readers for this book. It is intended to be a resource for practitioners and contributors to book sprinting; however, it is not a definitive how-to guide or manual. It provides a reflection on the practice itself. In this way, it contributes to wider discussions about the changing structure of "The Book", about the circulation of knowledge and material conditions of production. It also challenges managerial techniques that over-determine knowledge production through instrumental technologies of performativity (such as cost-benefit analysis).

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 provide a conceptual and analytical background for the book. These chapters, by the nature of their contents, undertake a relatively abstract level of analysis, and can be skipped and returned to later, or read iteratively if the reader wishes to jump straight into the case studies and the more practice-oriented aspects of book sprinting. Indeed, we have tried to write this text to enable multiple entry points for reading and browsing. However, we have also structured the book so that the chronology of the chapters provides scaffolding for understanding the process and deploying the concepts and practices in the under-determined form that enables and supports the fullest range of creativity and engagement of participants. We now turn to the critical and conceptual underpinnings of the approach.

SUGGESTED TOOLS

- Internet
- Book Sprints, <http://www.booksprints.net/>
- Testimonials
- Photos of Previous Sprints, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/101584348@N06/>
- Alexander, C. (1979) *The Timeless Way of Building*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Woolf, V.A ([1928] 2000) *Room of One's Own*, London: Penguin.

TEXTUAL ARTEFACTS

In this chapter, we present a background framework for thinking about Book Sprints and its related practices. The aim is to present some useful concepts and ideas, to consider the problematics that the approach emerges from, both for thinking about Book Sprints, and also to give some context for the ideas of collaboration and sharing that Book Sprints offers as an alternative to traditional notions of authorship and writing. In the first section, we offer some historical contextualization of the book and then move to discuss questions of velocity and speed in relation to perceived (and actual) benefits of writing and collaborating at an accelerated pace. Finally, we turn to the question of the deployment of the Book Sprint patterns developed in this book, patterns which are drawn from the experience of the Book Sprint team and their experience in over 80 successful Book Sprints.

BOOK HISTORIES, PRESENTS AND POSSIBLE FUTURES

Books and the practices that surround them have a long and contested history.

The book itself should be understood as a textual artefact of historically specific socio-technical practices, mediated by institutions, economics and power. For instance, the conditions of textual copying and distribution that surrounded the bookshops of Ancient Rome, in the Alexandrian library, or in medieval monasteries and university towns, made it possible for the emergence of elites that were literate, and created what Eisenstein (1979:10) called a "bookish" culture before books emerged.

The culture of copying and reproduction appeared to be threatened by the invention of printing, it was actively encouraged, for example, in Johannes Trithemius' *De Laude Scriptorum* (In Praise of Scribes) in 1492, where he argued that "monks should not stop copying books because of the invention of printing" (1979: 14). The consequent explosion in print book production, copied or not, was unprecedented. Indeed, in the 50-year lifetime of a man born in 1453, the year of the fall of Constantinople, about eight million books were printed, more perhaps than all the scribes of Europe had produced since Constantine founded his city in A.D. 300 (Eisenstein 1979: 45).

The emergence of books and the resultant knowledge explosion is clearly a complicated and multifaceted process of technological diffusion and social practices, linked through complex cycles of textual production, distribution and consumption. It is fair to say, however, that the spread of knowledge and the associated cultural changes have had far-reaching and important implications for modernity. The transition from script to print was a major socio-technological shift that created a mass reading public and contributed to the structuration of knowledge for a modern society. The book in the printed form was, of course, instrumental to these changes.

With the rise of digital mediums, another moment arises whereby changes made possible by the affordances of new media set the stage for new modes of production, distribution and consumption. The world "is transitioning from analogue, structured in most part by the physicality of destination, to the digital", but this new media form is notably computational in form (Berry 2014: 1). Indeed, N. Katherine Hayles argues that "evidence is mounting [that] people in general, and young people in particular, are doing more screen reading of digital materials than ever before. Meanwhile, the

reading of print books and of literary genres (novels, plays, and poems) has been declining over the last twenty years " (Hayles 2010: 62).

Indeed, historians have become more interested in examining how particular tools of inscription both shape writing and literature, "whether it's the quill pen of the Romantic poets or the early round typewriter, known as a writing ball, that Friedrich Nietzsche used to compose some aphoristic fragments" (Schuessler 2011). It is in the context of profound changes in cultural techniques related to reading and the consumption of written materials (Siegert 2013), together with the current transformations in the publishing industry, that new models and practices of writing have emerged, mediated by digital technologies. Even the most commonplace use of Microsoft Word in textual production, not only in business circles, but also in creative writing, academic and other textual forms, raises interesting questions about writing practice. From the fluidity of copy-paste and delete, to spell-checking, tracking changes, layout techniques, styling and the distributive possibilities of digital files, there can be little doubt that the techniques and experiences of writing have been remarkably transformed in the context of digital media.

In this respect, Book Sprints as textual artefacts emerged during the late 2000s in a period of significant change in the publishing industry. As recounted by Adam Hyde, the founder of Book Sprints, the approach was drawn out of experiments to enable the writing of manuals for free software. Enthusiastic early funders included Columbia Vale Law Center, Free Software Foundation, Mozilla, Google Open Source Programmes Office, InterNews, the Science Museum in Paris, Transmediale, and Steven Kovacs, both in the extractive and generative mode of sprinting practice.

It should not be underestimated how the characteristics of publishing today raise specific possibilities and challenges in terms of institutions, economics and power. There is a tendency, for instance, to describe the increasing production of books as democratizing, however, it would be more accurate to think in terms of disruption. The creative destruction of existing markets, challenges to authority, and undermining of established institutions, are aspects central to the contemporary circulation of knowledge. If authorship now becomes available in new ways, it equally gets enmeshed in an emergent set of softwarization processes which raise the challenge of automated possibilities for valorization or monetization.

While subject to the contingencies of use, such developments contribute to a general context within which Book Sprints are enacted. In these historically specific

conditions, techniques that are conducive to aspects of reflection and the generation of collective knowledge and empowerment are urgently required. Indeed, given the disorganized diversification of production processes and infrastructures, there still remain unexplored and unrealized possibilities for experimentation and radical innovation.

QUERY A: WHY SPRINT?

The term 'sprinting' itself is somewhat problematic. While invoking notions of extreme sports, competition or racing against the clock, there is an obvious investment in desires for rapid-production that fits in lockstep with the excessive demands of informational economies. The practice of sprinting holds the potential for new modes of commodification by intensifying differences in the distribution of information ('getting the scoop'), but also cannot be reduced to this dynamic alone. From a more radical perspective, sprinting might be considered within the ambiguous politics of accelerationism: trying to outpace the mode of development on its own terms. Certainly, this could be one mode of theoretical analysis; however, we prefer to utilize Book Sprints as an exploratory approach that has multiple registers, numerous criteria for success and failure, diverse and singular outcomes, all of which depend on the enabling environment, and any of which are up for revision and critique.

An interest in sprinting, moreover, should not be taken as an obsessively fetishized mode of work. Let's face it, Book Sprints are not a future model of all publishing engagements. Diverse strategies across the board are needed in publishing as long as current institutional settings remain perpetually revolutionized or disrupted. The decision between slowing-down and speeding-up is not an absolute.

QUERY B: ON METHOD

Book Sprints could be taken as an extractive method; that is, the expropriation of embodied knowledge in ways that are fit and adequate for valorization. In this mode, method is a form of mere reason; the logical formula capable of being easily reproduced, scaled up and automated. Certainly, this can be monetized within the context of specific instrumentalized contexts; however, in our experience, Book Sprints are always situated technologies, having not had to standardize the approach

as if it were a one-size-fits-all service. It is more important to focus on the needs of particular writing collectives rather than it being a universalized moment.

Book Sprints might, in this way, be considered in terms of a recent interest in the politics of method. The inventiveness of the approach, in other words, can be drawn out and reimagined beyond the delimited contexts of instrumentalization. Granted, this dimension is not guaranteed by every imaginary and implementation of short form methods, and this is precisely why an emphasis on frameworks is decisive, which includes some reflection on ethics and facilitation.

SUGGESTED TOOLS

- Credit Cards
- Map of venue
- P-DPA Log, <http://p-dpa.tumblr.com/>
- Smart Phone
- Laptop
- Elastic Waistbands
- Foam Earplugs
- Downloaded TV Drama (Silicon Valley, Mad Men, Game of Thrones)
- Eisenstein, E. (1979) *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*, Volumes I and II, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hayles, N. K. (2010) 'How We Read: Close, Hyper, Machine', ADE Bulletin, Number 150.
- Siegert, B. (2013) 'Cultural Techniques: Or the End of the Intellectual Postwar Era in German Media Theory', *Theory, Culture Society* (2013) 30: 48-65.
- Berry, D. M. (2014) *Critical Theory and the Digital*, New York: Bloomsbury.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

In this chapter, we want to begin to develop the concepts and histories that were noted in the previous chapters to think about the ways in which context matters in relation to the Book Sprint process. Here we particularly want to work at two scales, the big, to connect to wider issues in relation to the situating of Book Sprints in a wider political economy, but also the small in relation to the local place in which the enabling environment of the Book Sprint is working. The aim is to start to relate the background concepts to the realities of Book Sprint processes, and ensure that the connection with concrete contextual considerations is signposted.

The key issues are questions of institutions and facilitation as important moments for consideration of how the context structures the kind of Book Sprint that takes place. There is clearly a political economy involved in sprinting, after all, time is an important consideration, and today as Lyotard reminds us, time is money (Lyotard 1999: 5), but also the resources and spaces that Book Sprints require to function (discussed in more detail below) are a consideration in relation to efficiency and cost. We describe these moments as critical points of translation in the enabling environment.

INSTITUTIONS

One of the striking aspects of Book Sprints is that they form temporary organizations through collaborative experimentation. These forms are delimited in time and space by the context of the project; and as such, they involve a temporary coalition of labor forces within what we might call reticular, that is networked, modes of production. In a service mode, however, Book Sprints require forms of funding and capital investment which set at play a number of important economic translations.

For example, given that Book Sprints first arose within the context of FLOSS Manual development (free documentation for free software), they are subject to a critique by

the free-content proponents. Indeed, it should go without saying that Book Sprints can, in fact, be expensive to fund and run. They cost time, money, and resources, and they demand intensive and exhaustive modes of labor to produce the book content within the time periods available. In this respect, there are a number of critical dynamics that necessarily occur prior to the event, like the explicit request for a particular type of book to be produced, that shape the experience and final book as a product. These need to be taken into consideration explicitly in any development of a Book Sprint and in reflection on processes that might take place afterwards.

Nevertheless, the Book Sprint holds constitutive relations with existing institutions that creates tensions which are often difficult to negotiate or parry with. By institution, we are thinking of traditional codified structures, hierarchically organized and oriented towards means-end goals; for example, corporations, public bureaucracies and non-government organizations. To a certain extent, this is manifested in the relation between two different forms of rationality particular to these two forms of organisation, one fixed, and goal-oriented, and the other less fixed in form, resulting from temporary moments and interactions which enable a more communicative mode of interaction and enabling cross disciplinary forms of debate and discussion. This distinction is key to understanding what is unique to Book Sprints and gives them power in relation to other methods and approaches.

It is important to grasp, therefore, how Book Sprints work between and across institutional ecologies. For instance, an ideal involves bringing together individuals from different sectors, each of which can hold different expertises, skills and even languages. This ideal can be used as a buy-in technique, and can encourage knowledge transfer to or from different institutions. This process is obviously susceptible to difficulties, however, given that such disparate understandings and political investments will inevitably lead to a higher chance of miscommunication, disagreements and conflict. In this respect, the cross-disciplinary formation of expert knowledge is fraught with potential pitfalls as this relates to the pre-existing embeddedness of organizational structures.

FACILITATION

The role of the facilitator is central to Book Sprints in the governance of group dynamics, the mediation of controversy, and the imposition of the deadline. Facilitation is, therefore, a complex performance involving productive power and

ethics. The presence of a group of people in the same space, the timeframe, and the commitment alone do not make a Book Sprint without sound facilitation.

The facilitator is a member of the group but does not take part in actual writing dynamics, therefore he or she does not contribute to the content of the book. He or she creates an enabling environment in which the group can collaborate creatively and purposefully. The facilitator aims to make sure that every participant shares their ideas and takes part in the outcome of the book, enables participants to be engaged, read and write together. Using a light-touch approach that increases motivation, and with care toward different learning styles, the facilitator may also have to carefully manage potential conflict.

Within the context of Book Sprints, one of the key tensions that emerges is that between control and freedom. Here we take “control” to indicate the managerial function that can easily emerge in contexts where a facilitator provides guidance and support to the participants who are working within the sprint form. It would be mistaken to generate a space of perceived “freedom” for the participants by techniques of manipulation, controlling space, resources and so forth, whilst directing productivity towards maximized output and speed.

There are a number of significant risks involved in these acts of translation: the potential for a charismatic organization, moments of unaccountability, the dangers of structures of domination or exploitation. The role and responsibility of the facilitator is different from that of the leader or the manager: the facilitator does not produce content, but rather enables conditions through which freedoms are enacted, enthusiasms are induced, and creativity is channeled. This means that the facilitator has to steer between the Scylla of managerialism and the Charybdis of a neoliberal persona.

While certainly the writing of the long-form text is important, the Book Sprint, in contrast to alternative approaches to collaboration, instantiates the facilitator as a non-manager. Instead, the weight is placed upon maximizing autonomy and freedom for participants, although crucially within the context of the group, and using positive and enabling forms of interaction to initiate and encourage collaboration.

It would be easy to dismiss this articulation of the facilitator's role, after all, we've all been involved in awful team-building exercises which relied on tricks and sleight of

hand; however, the commitment to the free action of the participants, and the receptiveness to feedback and critique during the Book Sprint, is built into the DNA of the process. This highlights the importance of an ethic of care within Book Sprints (and detailed in the following chapters), and why trained facilitators are an important aspect of the Book Sprint process, rather than an ad hoc, or easily jettisoned as an optional extra. The role of the facilitator is ultimately connected to an ethic of do no harm, and as such, requires that patience and care are at the forefront of the mind of the facilitator when undertaking their role.

SUGGESTED TOOLS

- Scissors
- The Facilitator
- Tape
- Power Strips, long cables (5 meters)
- Wi-Fi 802.11ac
- Codified Processes
- Critical Media Theorists
- Stendhai ([1830] 2002) *The Red and the Black*, trans. Roger Gard, London: Penguin.
- Lyotard, J. F. (1999) *Postmodern Fables*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

THOREAU'S MOTHER

Traditional book authorship is assumed to be a slow and solitary process, and the traditional author as someone like the nineteenth-century American philosopher and naturalist Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau famously built himself a cabin in the woods at Walden Pond in Massachusetts where he wrote the masterpiece *Walden, or, Life in the Woods*, which extols the virtues of contemplation and self-reliance. Paul Theroux (1983), for instance, draws attention to the fact that Thoreau's version of independence included having his laundry done for him every week by his mother, a contradiction that is not mentioned in the book. In the nineteenth century, such domestic labor could be taken utterly for granted, and the singular, exceptional philosopher tended not to be critically reflexive about affective work.

The Book Sprint, like numerous other digital technological and experiential platforms designed for collaborative writing, such as the wiki, appears to challenge the once-pervasive idea that books can only be written in solitude—the sedimented notion of a single writer in a one-room cabin. However, as discussed earlier, we should be continually aware of the fact that the production of textual artefacts always involves complex divisions of labor and uninterrogated cultural politics and habits.

Taking note of the obfuscated and underplayed aspects of knowledge production, this section reflects on how the enabling environment for a Book Sprint is taken care of. In particular, it focuses on material conditions of collective work between the facilitator and contributors as a critical mode of reflection and situated practice. Indeed, Book Sprints are not a purely social event, nor a purely professional retreat, nor an intellectual symposium, but they may have many aspects of each. In this respect, sprinting is clearly part of a constellation of time-limited rapid production events like the hackathon, unconference, scrum, and code-sprint, which tend towards blurring distinctions between leisure and work. These ambiguous characteristics unfold in the complex power dynamics of collaboration and the utilization of different tools and techniques, including a number of specific concerns like poor writing and negative experiences within the group.

Setting up the enabling environment for Book Sprints is an art, although there's no denying that it involves sustained attention to seemingly mundane details such as creating an attractive and usable space, providing an abundance of pens and paper, and the mobilization of general intellect. Indeed, Book Sprints are usually held at a site that is new to the participants in order to break previous associations with their ordinary workspaces and habits or routines. In our experience, whatever decisions are made involve a degree of "taking care" as a practice. Even the specification of the table in the main meeting space may be taken into account when organizing a Book Sprint: for example, in our experience rectangular tables encourage more interaction than round or square.

The key, though, remains the opening of a space, and hence it is not that the sprint must be held in an expensive hotel or small cabin in the woods. Indeed a location that allows participants to arrange personal appointments, to go out partying or slip away to undertake tourism, will undermine the sprint sense of being-together, or Geist. The Book Sprint might even take place in a rented vacation house, perhaps in a rural setting or a separated space, but with copious bedrooms, a BBQ area, some mismatched plates and cutlery -- the simulacrum of the bourgeois good life. Nonetheless, it is important that the Book Sprint strives to use a location that mitigates the inequalities of gender, sexuality, disability, race or class.

The group might form mediated unities of various sizes as the Geist moves them to work on various writing and editing tasks together or alone. Book Sprint patterns shift between individual text production, small group text production or review, and plenary group discussion. Book Sprints tend to be noisy, sometimes very noisy indeed, as discussion is an integral part of the writing process at a sprint. . When smaller groups split off for separate meetings, they need their own space with acoustic separation so that they can concentrate on their work without distractions. The work space must therefore be flexible enough to accommodate various human configurations and production scenarios, so Book Sprint venues generally require movable chairs and even movable tables, along with movable type.

The Book Sprint is by design commensal, meaning that participants generally eat together. As anthropologists know well, eating together is an important cultural practice and helps form bonds, as well as raising the morale of the writing group. Coffee and tea, by necessity, and various kinds of other drinks, should be ready-to-hand through the process.

There's also no denying that in practice, there are often unfortunate difficulties with the material conditions of the Book Sprint. Some aspects are seemingly banal, but they still significantly shape the textures of work, such as things breaking, running out of paper or lack of heating. Book Sprint organizers, facilitators, and contributors will deal with such issues with care. But since the Book Sprint in its very design recognizes that all books, not just Book Sprint books, are products of human embodiment, care to the material conditions of the participants ensures that the duty of care extends to both humans and non-humans.

SUGGESTED TOOLS

- Coffee (fresh ground)
- Tea (Japanese Green)
- Reward confectionary (Kinder eggs)
- Greens
- Wine and Beer
- Bath Towels (Egyptian Cotton)
- Bathroom
- Laundry facilities
- Kitchen facilities (dishwasher)
- Vacuum cleaner
- Stiegler, B, *Taking Care of Youth and the Generations*, trans. Stephen Barker, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.
- Theroux, P. (1983) 'Introduction', in *The Maine Woods* by Henry David Thoreau, edited by Joseph J. Moldenhauer. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

PATTERNS

Book Sprints make use of certain key patterns: concepting, structuring, writing, revising, and publishing. These patterns include practices and techniques that are employed by the facilitator and the contributors throughout the different phases of the process. They are not necessarily sequential phases that happen in the order presented here, but instead may happen at the same time, or may be revisited at any time as needed. Some of the patterns have dependencies: revising will need some written text to work with, and publishing depends on having a revised version of the book. Certain patterns may be more important to a particular Book Sprint, depending on the space and on the development of a particular process.

CONCEPTING

During concepting, the book's themes, topics, and concepts are discussed and loosely defined in a creative, semi-structured environment. The main goal is to determine the thematic elements of the book, usually by capturing contributors' keywords on sticky notes, paper, or whiteboards. Other goals are to create a group dynamic, establish trust, take ownership of concepts, and take ownership of the work space.

ACTIONS

Concepting moves from a broad, open discussion to a narrowing-down of ideas in a process that makes all ideas explicit and visible to everyone. Concepting is arguably the most decisive and creative part of the process, and is generally the first action taken by the Book Sprint group. The discussion may start with the general topic of the book and the different perspectives that each contributor brings to the table. The hosting organization may state its expectation of the outcome, and this expectation may set the framework for the book. The group then discusses the scope of the book and loosely defines a target reader.

A facilitator can ensure that everyone is heard equally, reflect emerging consensus back to the group, and increasingly narrow down the topics. This conversation may be very straightforward in a homogeneous group working on a well-defined subject in an "extractive" sprint, while a heterogeneous group working on exploratory terrain in a "generative" sprint may easily drift into a competitive or scattered conversation mode that may make the book project seem to slip into dissonance and frustration. The facilitator can mediate different positions, postpone difficult decisions, or propose to include disagreements into the emerging text rather than forcing consensus. Establishing trust is crucial at this point--trust in the process, in the facilitator, and among contributors--and it has to be reinforced throughout the process.

In conceiving, the facilitator analyzes the group dynamics and the evolving discussion and decides how to move forward. Some form of visualization is key to give the discussion more shape and decisiveness. In a typical exercise, the facilitator may prompt the group with a question (such as "What does the reader need to know?"), asking each individual to write words and phrases on sticky notes and post them on the empty wall, then sort the notes into related clusters during structuring. These notes serve as a visual reminder of concepts and conceptual categories throughout the sprint.

STRUCTURING

During structuring, the loose collection of thematic elements generated in conceiving begins to be organized into broader themes, topics, conceptual strands, and sets. These are then mapped gradually onto sections, chapters, and sub-sections to create part or all of a draft table of contents for the book to be written.

ACTIONS

When structuring, contributors sort the notes generated in conceiving into clusters of related terms and ideas. The facilitator can further ask contributors to move related clusters together, to construct a possible hierarchy or sequence of clusters, or to come up with a working title for each cluster. The resulting concept map can be turned into a preliminary table of contents of the entire book or into a portion of it. The structured concept map will contain all the ideas generated by the different contributors with their different sets of expertise, and the facilitator will confer with contributors to determine who will begin writing which part of the book. In this early stage,

contributors will usually volunteer to begin writing the parts of the book that they are most interested in or feel most comfortable writing about. Individuals or pairs of participants can also be assigned to start itemizing the individual sections to flesh out the argument and narrative flow before starting to write.

WRITING

In writing, contributors produce content for the sections or chapters as individuals or in sub-groups. No single person contributes to only one chapter throughout the process. The chapters the contributors start writing are “owned” only in the loosest sense of the word, and writers are encouraged to move on to fresh material as soon as they are roughly finished (or get blocked in writing), freeing their written work up for additional writing, or for revising by another contributor. This is a key part of the practice which serves to prevent writers getting overly attached to their words, to make sure that different perspectives and expertise appear throughout the text, and to create cohesion in the book.

ACTIONS

During long stretches of a Book Sprint, people will naturally be busy writing. Especially in the beginning of the process, the facilitator will assign everyone parts of the book to write, whether individually or in pairs or in small groups, making sure to take into account which people want to write which parts, and which people are best suited to write which parts. The overall structure of the book may not yet be definitive at this stage, and the arguments and narrative flow will take more concrete shape during writing. The book's evolving structure can be refined later in the process.

To allow individuals, pairs, or sub-groups to focus on very specific parts of the book, the facilitator will keep track of the evolving book, and will set assignments in response to how much progress all individuals, pairs, or sub-groups have made on their assigned tasks. Although writing is, quite obviously, fundamental to the Book Sprint, it may occupy less of the total time than may be expected. A sizeable group of people will often produce a large amount of text quickly. This phase is not just about writing but also about pacing the text production. People will often ask questions and get into discussions about the book which can be loud and opinionated. This is part of the experience of writing in a group, but there will be stages where all members of the group are writing silently and busily.

Participants may split off to separate spaces while writing when they need to focus without being distracted by ongoing conversations, or when they need to have a conversation without distracting others in the group; the facilitator can help direct this traffic when necessary, asking individuals or groups to find a new space. Usually the facilitator allows conversations to happen as needed, keeping them in check. Gentle questions and reminders. ("How's it going? How close are you to finishing?") can help keep contributors keep writing at a reasonable pace.

REVISING

In revising, participants read and reread, restructure, edit, rewrite, and reorganize the text. Although there may be sections that remain to be written, the contributors will edit chapters started by others, add or change content, smooth and unify language, and even alter the overall structure of the book.

ACTIONS

Revising ranges from high-level restructuring to line editing for style and syntax, to proof reading. As soon as some contributors come to the end of writing one section of the text, that section may be revised by others. This often happens at the same time as other sections are still being written, and time-keeping and coordinating by the facilitator become crucial. The revisions may be done individually, in small groups, and sometimes in plenary group discussions.

The facilitator may assign texts to specific participants, for example pairing-off an expert with a non-expert to work together to make technical language accessible. Printed paper copies can be extremely handy, not only for a granular revision of the text, but also to get a spatial overview of the relative length and order of chapters. A print-out of the written text may be laid out on the floor, cut up, and re-arranged.

In this phase, contributors get a general feel for the book, and individual efforts will be merged into a more coherent body of text. As a result, texts may often be significantly restructured, changed, or even deleted. This introduces potential conflict – especially when people have to give up their sole control of something they have just created, and when diverging perspectives are reconciled into one single narrative. An experienced facilitator will empower each contributor to make decisions in this

process, at the same time creating an atmosphere of trust to ensure that editing is done respectfully.

In Book Sprints that are in an extractive mode, where the type and purpose of the book being written is obvious and the contributors share a defined and specific vocabulary from the beginning, the initial structure of the book often will not change greatly once it has been generated by conceiving.

In a generative mode, the writing usually takes a more exploratory approach, where the kind of book being written has not been decided and the participants come from very different fields or perspectives. Restructuring the book may lead to identifying new subject areas, and the group may need to return to conceiving to generate a revised structure.

When writing comes to an end, all writers begin revising, working on the editing and general composition of the book. Copy editing, checking of the flow of the text, and final proofing are crucial parts of the last stage. A designated "target reader" or a pair or sub-group may be asked to go through the entire text from the top to the bottom. The end of this phase is more about getting things done, finishing small leftover tasks, checking consistency, verifying references, and so forth: anything to prepare the book for publishing.

PUBLISHING

In publishing, a final version of the entire written text enters the production process, which may include sending the text to an external professional copy editor, creating a cover, and adding illustrations. When this process is completed at the finish of the Book Sprint, licensing information is added to the book, and the book is published, usually via PDF and ePub versions. It is then made available immediately to be distributed on the internet or through other distribution systems.

ACTIONS

Near the end of the Book Sprint (for instance, on the last day), the final version of the text is checked for errors, the order of chapters is finalized, and decisions on the tone and argument of the book are made in preparation for publishing. Decisions are also made about illustrations and the book's cover. The facilitator will ensure that the

book is ready for publishing when the Book Sprint ends: extensions should not be allowed. The book that exists when the Book Sprint is finished is the book that is published. Sometimes, groups will revisit their published book to generate new versions or editions, but the version published after the Book Sprint must be regarded not as a draft but as a published book. The published book (often in a PDF version and an ePUB version) can be generated directly out of the collaborative writing platform used during the Book Sprint or may be created by a book designer.

Publishing in the sense used in Book Sprints refers to making the book available to the public in one way or another. "Publishing" is a contested term, but Book Sprints treat publishing as "a button" (Shirky 2012). Pressing the publishing button is a crucial finishing ritual for the Book Sprint.

At some point before or during the Book Sprint, decisions will be made about the cover design, the title, the attribution, the licensing, and the distribution of the book. These decisions are usually agreed on with the whole group, although the host and funders may prescribe certain requirements before the Book Sprint begins. Open licenses tend to lend themselves to reflect a collaborative process without one privileged author. Very often, the group will choose to make the book freely accessible on the internet or will distribute it through the internal channels of a related organization. Sometimes, if funding is available, the group will decide to distribute the book as hard copies, or the group may opt for finding a publishing house. The book "OpenStack Operations Guide" was produced in a Book Sprint in February 2013, for example, and was published with an open license online, after which a later iteration was published by O'Reilly Media in May 2014 (see <http://shop.oreilly.com/product/0636920032625.do>).

SUGGESTED TOOLS

- Room, not too big
- Table, not too round (rectangular)
- Remote copy editor, New Zealand-based (Kiwi-time)
- Designer, on-site
- 3M Post-it Notes, 75mm x 75mm, 12 colours

- 3M Post-it Notes, 75mm x 127mm, 12 colours
- Post-It wall surface, non-gloss (or window)
- Projector (HDMI)
- Projection screen (or white wall)
- Printer (laser, not inkjet)
- 3 x 500 paper, 80 g/m, white
- Marker pen (black)
- Paper board, 22.9cm x 22.1cm

Shirky, Clay (2012, April 5) How We Will Read: Clay Shirky Interview conducted by Sonia Saraiya.
Accessed 16 May 2014, <http://blog.findings.com/post/20527246081/how-we-will-read-clay-shirky>

CASE STUDIES

This section contains exemplary case studies that demonstrate how Book Sprints have been used effectively in enabling environments. It can be read for some background information and concrete insights into the Book Sprint process.

Book Sprints range from extractive projects, where knowledge of the participants is aggregated, to more generative ones, where new ideas are sparked by the group dynamics. When Book Sprints began as a means of quickly producing software manuals for free and open source software, they experimented mostly with the extractive mode, assembling the knowledge of subject-matter experts in the room. Dozens of software manuals were produced for FLOSS Manuals, and the method was refined and iterated. Book Sprints, moreover, began to experiment with using the Book Sprint process for other genres of textual artefacts, for example, bringing artists and scholars together for a sprint to produce creative and idea-driven work such as the Collaborative Futures book (<http://collaborative-futures.org/>). These approaches turned out to be substantially different, and the Book Sprint method adapted and evolved accordingly. And while every Book Sprint was (and is) different, the two modes - extractive and generative - became apparent, mapping known territory vs. exploring unknown territory.

We are providing these case studies to show ways in which Book Sprints can serve a variety of purposes. The way in which the patterns are used can be creatively assembled and reassembled in different contexts and locations. Concepting is clearly the moment that a facilitator will return to, for reading the social ontology of a group, for brainstorming, for allowing individual expression and ownership of concepts, reassessing the direction of travel. But it's worth paying attention to other elements that enable or disable the Book Sprint environment. The case study schema points to these elements through a short questionnaire with 'the Facilitator'.

The following case studies are ordered from most extractive to most generative:-

CASE STUDY #1 'EVERGREEN IN ACTION', 'FONT FORGE', 'LEARNING WITH ETOYS'

(<https://lwn.net/Articles/528730/>)

1. Genre

Software documentation.

2. Subject of books

A library management system ('Evergreen in Action'); An application for producing fonts ('Font Forge'); A Text book for teaching programming to kids ('Learning with eToys').

3. Size and composition of group

25 people, divided into three groups 7 or 8. Included software developers, teachers, users, font experts, client managers, documentation editors.

4. Duration

Three days, December 2012.

5. Sponsor/stakeholder

Google sponsored the event. FLOSS Manuals and Aspiration Technologies were co-organizers and their communities were the beneficiaries of the books.

6. Objective

These communities needed updated user documentation, so three concurrent Book Sprints were held in order to economize. Each team from each of the three communities represented by the books brought their own people. Additional people, who were not involved in any of the projects, were invited to the sprints to join each of the teams so that the groups would be larger and more diverse. The hope was that these additional people would become members of the communities.

7. Unusual feature

Three Book Sprints were held concurrently. Common sessions with everyone assembling from all three groups were limited to the beginning and end. You can manage 3 groups, treated as separate books, which helped to understand how larger groups can be managed. Three project leads were appointed and communicated with directly by the Facilitator.

8. Attention to particular methodological phase or pattern

The content was very concrete, straightforward material, which made it possible to hold three Book Sprints simultaneously, so the key patterns were structuring.

9. Generative (something new) or extractive (aggregation of existing knowledge) or both

Very extractive.

10. Venue

The Google conference rooms in the GooglePlex in Silicon Valley, which was problematic because of corporate security issues. Restrictions on where participants could go hindered the free flow of the process. (For example, you couldn't go to the restrooms unescorted or go for a walk on the campus.)

11. Distribution

These books were distributed as PDFs, ePub, and printed bound copies on the day the Sprint finished and were given to the participants of the Book Sprints the following day. They were also released through the FLOSS Manuals website.

12. Facilitator Learning

That Book Sprints were scalable, so it was possible to run three sprints simultaneously, for three different organisations. This demonstrated that the format for extractive Book Sprints was effective.

CASE STUDY #2 'OPENSTACK OPERATIONS GUIDE'

(<http://docs.openstack.org/ops/>)

(<http://shop.oreilly.com/product/0636920032625.do>)

1. Genre

Technology book on OpenStack operations.

2. Subject of book

Shows how to design, deploy, and maintain a private or public Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), using the open source OpenStack platform. Experienced developers and OpenStack contributors documented how users can build clouds based on reference architectures, as well as how to perform daily administration tasks.

3. Size and composition of group

Five people.

4. Duration

Five days (February 2013).

5. Sponsor/stakeholder

OpenStack Foundation, RedHat Linux.

6. Objective

To create a guide showing how to operationalize OpenStack.

7. Unusual feature (anomaly)

None. This project went smoothly and was regarded by all as highly successful.

8. Attention to particular methodological phase or pattern

In the final phase, during the revision, we set up a matrix on a whiteboard to show if each chapter had been checked and proofed. Every element was double checked—spellcheck, image check, technical check, structural check completion check, etc. Very effective system.

9. Generative (something new) or extractive (aggregation of existing knowledge) or both

Extractive.

10. Venue

Rackspace's corporate facilities in Austin, Texas.

11. Distribution

Print and digital books were launched at the OpenStack conference. They received a huge positive response. In May 2014, O'Reilly published the book for the retail trade.

12. Facilitator Learning

An inspiring sprint where there were high-level experts who were deeply respectful of one another's expertise. There was a real feeling of community and a sense that people could openly rely on the expertise of others. Very supportive and open.

CASE STUDY #3 'MINING CONTRACTS: HOW TO READ AND UNDERSTAND THEM'

(<http://www.resourcecontracts.org/blog/guides-to-contract-terminology.html>)

1. Genre

Professional book about the mining industry.

2. Subject of book

Explains how to read and understand obscure mining contracts, so that people who want give input are fully informed.

3. Size and composition of group

15 people from around the world, including lawyers, mining engineers, watchdog groups, and two ministers of extractive industries.

4. Duration

Five days, November 2013.

5. Sponsor/stakeholder

World Bank, Revenue Watch, International League of Senior Lawyers, Columbia University Vale Law Center, OpenOil.

6. Objective

To create a book that would help stakeholders, including the general public, enter into conversations with the mining industry about the arcane process of the extractive industries and influence them.

7. Unusual feature

None. This project went smoothly and was regarded by all as highly successful.

8. Attention to particular methodological phase or pattern

Because the group was so big, the book needed to be broken down into multiple sections and worked on separately by sub-groups of 5 to 6 people. In some ways, these were concurrent Book Sprints.

9. Generative (something new) or extractive (aggregation of existing knowledge) or both
Both

10. Venue

A formal wedding venue outside of Baltimore -- sort of a country estate. The rigid meal and refreshment schedules were disruptive, but everything else at this peaceful venue worked well.

11. Distribution

The book was printed immediately and 2,000 copies were given away at a conference in South Africa. The book has since been reprinted for other conferences.

12. Facilitator Learning

One participant was communicating with an outside stakeholder during the sprint and receiving input. This was highly disruptive and should be discouraged.

CASE STUDY #4 'FROM URBAN SPACE TO FUTURE PLACE'

1. Genre

Analytical documentation.

2. Subject of book

A Summer School for urban interaction designers.

3. Size and composition of group

Eight people – six postgraduate and research students, as well as working practitioners who responded to an open call, plus two senior lecturers. The

participants' disciplinary fields were all design-related including Graphic Communication Design, Interaction Design, Architecture, Urban Design & Planning, New Media Art, Technology, Sociology, Anthropology.

4. Duration

3 days (October 2013).

5. Sponsor/stakeholder

FLOSS Manuals' Book Sprints for ICT Research EC Co-ordination Action Project, UrbanIxD research network.

6. Objective

To capture the experiences of the students at an urban interaction design summer school and analyze the definitions and possibilities of this new field.

7. Unusual feature

First of a series of Sprints constructed for Booksprints for ICT Research testing the process on ICT academics – the sprint was attended by observers, and a researcher conducting interviews with the participants.

8. Attention to particular methodological phase or pattern

No particular emphasis, although conceiving was the moment to read the group.

9. Generative (something new) or extractive (aggregation) or both

Both.

10. Venue

An abandoned Portuguese hill-top village, transformed into tourist accommodation. The original peasant farm features were retained. Rusting

pitchforks. Fresh bread was delivered every morning.

11. Distribution

Issuu.com and through the UrbanIxD network. There was some dissatisfaction expressed about the limitations of this open platform for academic texts.

12. Facilitator Learning

Reading the group. The need to balance out the power dynamics between junior and senior academics. Facilitators cannot get involved in backchannel complaining. The discovery of Henrik and his superfast design services really contributed to the success of this short Sprint.

CASE STUDY #5 'ADAPTIVE COLLECTIVE SYSTEMS - HERDING BLACK SHEEP'

(<http://smart.inf.ed.ac.uk/adaptive-collective-systems-herding-black-sheep/>)

1. Genre

Academic science book.

2. Subject of book

Analytical description of a theoretical framework - adaptive collective systems.

3. Size and composition of group

Five people (one of them as a remote participant).

4. Duration

Four days, November 2013.

5. Sponsor/stakeholder

FLOSS Manuals sponsored the event as part of its EC funded project - Book Sprints for ICT Research; in collaboration with FoCAS (Fundamentals of Collective Adaptive Systems).

6. Objective

To write an inspirational text for students of evolutionary computing and systems theory.

7. Unusual feature

The remote participation of a contributor by Skype. His disembodied presence became a disruption. During informal sessions, such as lunchtimes, the remote participant missed out on incidental but ultimately crucial developments. Sometimes he would not be available when needed. Other times he would over-compensate for his absence by speaking more often and longer than necessary. Initially he was given some latitude by virtue of his handicap of being absent, and the others gave him the floor. But he could not hear when his colleagues responded and it required the facilitator to intervene and moderate his monologues.

8. Attention to particular methodological phase or pattern

The concepting phase was returned to and iterated numerous times, with the post-it wall reflecting the high level of conceptual animation and deletion.

9. Generative (something new) or extractive (aggregation of existing knowledge) or both

Both, mostly generative. One result was that the group felt that the title Collective Adaptive Systems was inadequate, and that Adaptive Collective Systems was more accurate in describing this field of research.

10. Venue

A tourist hotel resort in Malta.

11. Distribution

Published on Issuu.com and through the FoCAS network.

12. Facilitator Learning

We iterated ourselves through the book by building on arguments we had just created. This has evolved a pattern in the Book Sprint process - 'forward ToC iteration'.

CASE STUDY #6 'NEW AESTHETICS, NEW ANXIETIES'
(HTTP://V2.NL/PUBLISHING/NEW-AESTHETIC-NEW-ANXIETIES)

1. Genre

Critical Media Theory.

2. Subject of book

Problematics of the New Aesthetics meme in media arts culture.

3. Size and composition of group

Seven people - curators, critical media theorists.

4. Duration

3 days, June 2012.

5. Sponsor/stakeholder

V2.

6. Objective

To write about the "political pressures of neoliberalism manifested in the infrastructures of media art, speculative design, net criticism, hacking, free and open source software development.

7. Unusual feature

First book sprint working with academics. Additionally some participants were uncomfortable with the subject and this required some management of interpersonal dynamics.

8. Attention to particular methodological phase or pattern

Because the topic was not directly confronted by the participants, the conceiving phase was overly iterated and reiterated.

9. Generative (something new) or extractive (aggregation) or both

Generative.

10. Venue

V2 arts centre Rotterdam, dark windowless, uncomfortable, claustrophobic, too far from the accommodation so that participants were not always together.

11. Distribution

Hard copy through V2, and distributed as PDF.

12. Facilitator Learning

I experienced difficulty in accessing the language of curators and theoreticians. The subject was very theoretical, and I needed to ground the discussion in something concrete, to make an intervention to grab key concepts and use them as anchors to navigate the book by providing some concrete scaffolding. We tried to map too much too fast onto the Table Of Contents – it is necessary to spend more time on clarifying at base level, define the subject, then define the problems. A facilitator needs to intuit when to act before moments of

confusions and un-productivity derail the process. I would also say the art context allowed me to experiment, which has influenced how I approach subsequent Book Sprints.

PLANNING CHECKLISTS

PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

All Book Sprint contributors should be together in the same place.

All participants should be present for the entire process.

Guests, visitors, and observers are discouraged.

Time is constrained; the end point cannot be altered once set.

Participants make a non-negotiable commitment to achieve something that seems, if not impossible, then at least highly unlikely.

The facilitator has the last say.

Contributors share ownership of what is written.

SELECTING CONTRIBUTORS

Think of a book title, possibly a subtitle. Before contributors are selected, it can help to determine the specific scope of the book, and choosing a title can help with scoping. For instance, one Book Sprint had the working title "How to Read and Understand Oil Contracts," which helped define the general expertise that would be needed to create the book. (<http://openoil.net/understanding-oil-contracts/>).

Subject-matter expertise is most important in choosing contributors, but if there is a choice between two people with the same expertise, it's best to choose the person more open to teamwork and collaboration.

Still, it is the facilitator's job to deal with the mix of personalities—that's part of the facilitation process. So don't spend too much time thinking about how personalities will mesh.

People with varying kinds of expertise can ensure that the book being written is rich and comprehensive. In this example they could be lawyers, government employees, civil society representatives, journalists, etc.

Contributors should have basic writing skills but do not need to be experienced writers. Contributors often discover that they have a different writing experience in a Book Sprint from their usual experience. One participant in a Book Sprint said he had suffered from writer's block before, but then found himself enjoying the experience of writing in a group of peers so much it broke the block and he was able to produce a great deal of text. Conversely, someone who writes regularly might suddenly find it difficult to write in this unusual environment.

In general, there should be no pre-assigned roles. During the process, certain roles will emerge. Someone less comfortable with writing might turn out to be a great information resource. Others might be especially skilled in structuring text or in transforming dry technical writing into interesting prose. All of these roles will emerge naturally during the Book Sprint.

The one role that might be pre-determined is that of a target reader. The target reader should present throughout the entire process as one of the contributors, but this participant does not necessarily have the same level of expertise as the others. He or she serves as a reality check for the content being written, an insurance policy that non-experts will be able to read and understand the book. In this example, the target reader was an employee of the hosting organization NGO Open Oil with a strong interest in transparency, but no background in law or the extractive industries.

SUPPORT TEAM

A logistical coordinator, ideally a non-participant, and ideally not the facilitator, helps to ensure that participants will arrive and leave the Book Sprint on time. Because face-to-face interaction is so key to the Book Sprint,

the complex task of getting many people to the location of the Book Sprint at a particular time is one that is best addressed separately. Contributors should have a single point of contact so that they know who to call or write if there are difficulties (as there inevitably are).

A copy editor can start to do light checking during the Book Sprint as soon as the first parts of the book are considered stable. This leaves less work for the copy editor's final pass of the entire book on the last day. All text will typically be reviewed and revised by several people in the group of contributors, and the language will be improved on each pass. However, knowing that there is an experienced copy editor who will make the final checks and adjustments can alleviate anxieties for some writers, especially when the book is being written in a language that is not everyone's mother tongue.

A book designer creates the layout of the book during the Book Sprint based on the genre and style of the content, and then composes the final book in different formats for printing and online dissemination. The book designer may be the same person as the illustrator, but for the sake of rapid production it may make sense to divide these tasks.

An illustrator will often start on the second or third day of the Book Sprint, when the content is already taking shape and the first ideas for illustrations emerge. Ideas for illustrations are often quite vague and need to be understood and fleshed out by the illustrator, so they have to work in close communication with the contributors. In contrast to the copy editor and the book designer, it is actually preferable to have an illustrator working in the same working space with the contributors, although in the background. Good illustrations not only sharpen concepts in the text but can also be a motivational tool that helps the group to envision the book. The moment when a proposal for a cover page is shown to the group is often the first time the book really takes shape as a tangible artifact in the participants' imagination.

WRITING GEAR

Each contributor usually brings his or her own laptop computer.

Each person usually already has a word processor that he or she regularly uses and knows well, but Book Sprint books are generally written on a collaborative authoring platform, especially one designed for Book Sprints such as BookType or PubSweet.

Plenty of sticky notes, big markers, and pens should be provided. Sticky notes and readable markers are probably the most important supplies for visualising ideas and for concept mapping. Sticky notes can be written individually, be put up on a wall, and then be clustered and structured. The markers should be thick enough so that all contributors can easily read from a distance what others wrote. Using sticky notes ensures that ideas, concepts, and words can be captured one per note and moved around so that ideas can be grouped and structured in new ways. From these clusters of sticky notes, often a table of contents will be created. The colorful sticky notes will later serve as visual memory markers throughout the entire Book Sprint.

Big pieces of paper, a flipchart, or a whiteboard can also be helpful to visualize ideas. Paper is still a great writing tool, especially in earlier stages of sketching ideas or bullet-pointing lists, and flipcharts and whiteboards allow ideas to be quickly captured and considered by a group or sub-group.

At a later working stage, it is helpful to have a fast laser printer to print out chapters or sections of the book. For many people it is more comfortable to review text on paper. Printouts can also be spread out on the floor to get an overview of the general structure, to compare the length of chapters, and to see them in relation to each other.

Sometimes it's a good technique to cut and paste these paper copies with scissors and tape, so these should be provided as well.

NETWORK, PLATFORMS, ELECTRICAL GEAR

Fast and reliable wi-fi allows participants (limited) connectivity to the outside world. In general, the Book Sprint is so absorbing and intense that participants have little if any time to check email, Twitter, and so on. But while it is important to maintain an immersive, distraction-free, even monastic ambience (a monastery guesthouse can be a great venue for a Book

Sprint), it is also true that the entire absence of internet access can itself be a distraction if participants are used to being continuously connected. And the internet is an important reference tool that might be very useful during the Book Sprint.

A video projector is helpful to introduce the collaborative writing platform and to project a visualization of the table of contents or specific parts of the book for group discussions.

There should be plenty of electrical outlets and power strips, as laptops and other electrical equipment will most likely be used.

A supply of power adapters should be available if participants are coming from other countries.

SPACE

It is best to hold a Book Sprint in a secluded, attractive, neutral venue, where participants won't be distracted by everyday work and responsibilities.

Participants need adequate workspace, with a large (but not too large) table for the whole group to work around and movable furniture for maximum flexibility.

Blank walls are necessary for concept mapping in the early stages of the Book Sprint.

Acoustically separated breakout spaces give smaller groups the opportunity to break away and work without distractions.

Buffet-style meals served near the work room (but not at the work table) give participants flexibility to eat when they're at a good stopping point rather than at scheduled times.

Abundant liquids, including water and caffeinated drinks during the day, will keep the group hydrated and alert. Alcoholic soporifics are excellent for winding down at the end of the day.

Clean restrooms with functioning plumbing, kleenex, and toilet paper will keep everyone comfortable during their stay.

AFTERWORD - FACILITATOR REFLECTIONS

Being involved in this Book Sprint on the Book Sprint has been one of the most rewarding, challenging, and interesting things I have ever done. It has been a process of getting inside my own head and process, simultaneously owning and disowning the ideas, of being both the subject, the host, contributor and facilitator. But nonetheless listening to other peoples' insights into what a Book Sprint is, and trying to remain quiet even if I disagree on a topic I know myself to be an expert on.

The great thing about this Book Sprint is that even though at times it has been a fraught process, and full of difficult paradoxes, it has helped me, as a facilitator, critically reflect on my practice. I have found myself submerged deep inside the content while trying to remain on top of the sprint in the facilitator role. I've been in the position of trying to steer people and at times be strongly directive, often against what they agree to, while at the same time knowing that the dynamics reflect that we are all great friends. I have found myself breaking golden facilitator rules because I felt my ego too involved, and then elation at times when I was able to let go and let the process be the process.

It has been the most difficult Book Sprint I have ever been involved with, but at the same time it has also been the most rewarding Book Sprint. Indeed, it causes me to wonder if the personal difficulties for me were necessary to elicit the insights and distance from my own practice. So I remain grateful for the friends that have come along this path with me. Who could ask for a better bunch of people?

Rachel Baker, who I have known for almost 20 years, has been involved in the Book Sprints for ICT Research program, studying five Book Sprints experimenting with the application of Book Sprints to the generation of academic outputs. David M. Berry and Michael Dieter, two great friends I met through a Book Sprint in Rotterdam, have been in three Book Sprints now and are the first people to look at the process and

provide insights into what the framing of the process could be, and helping to identify the forest when all I could see was the trees. Amanda French has been to three Book Sprints and is an experienced Unconference facilitator and THATCamp Coordinator - an event that shares DNA with Book Sprints. Mark Brokering has been a good friend and believer in the Book Sprint process even though this has been the first one he has experienced. And Barbara Rühling who I trained over an extended period, is a great facilitator, and is someone I am learning from already. It is a great privilege to be working with this group of people.

So, since this is actually the only space in the book that I am allowed to say what I think (sly grin) I will note a few things entirely out of context and in no particular order, and goodness help anyone that tries to edit this out of the book (bruhaha):

- contributors need to trust the facilitator else the spell is broken
- in conflict situations, be a sponge first - and if that doesn't work, then engage
- learn to read people from the very first minute they are seated around the Book Sprint table
- consider helping people look the other way when you know that they might not otherwise like what they might see
- when you make a decision, act immediately
- sometimes you will need to act before you have made a decision
- make light of the situation
- trust your gut at all times
- break existing power dynamics
- if you are terrified, it is a great Book Sprint
- break the spaces between people
- eat together

- don't worry about not sleeping
- be prepared to be the center of attention but leave your ego out of it
- always, always, finish the book

This Book Sprint has given us all the opportunity to articulate, in a fraught and tangled environment, as best we can on what a Book Sprint is. I learned a great deal, especially to do with the difficulty to be reflective on the process while you are in it. Above all, this experience proves to me that whatever this 'Book Sprint' thing is, it works.

Adam Hyde

Finkensteg 7, Neuenhagen bei Berlin, 16 May 2014.

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